

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8860

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY MADRID

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S E C R E T PARIS 10655

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MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLAD; HANDLE AS SPECAT

EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR NATO SP

SUBJECT: SPAIN AND NATO

REFS: (A) STATE 91998; (B) USNATO 1978

1. I CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES APRIL 25
TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF CLOSER TIES BETWEEN
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SPAIN AND NATO. AFTER LISTENING TO MY ARGUMENTS DRAWN

FROM REFTEL (A), SAUVAGNARGUES ASKED FOR EXAMPLES OF HOW LINKAGE BETWEEN SPAIN AND NATO MIGHT BE DEVELOPED. I PROVIDED THESE, DRAWING FROM BACKGROUND CONTAINED REFTEL (B). THROUGHOUT, I STRESSED THE VITAL IMPORTANCE TO FRANCE AND OUR NATO ALLIES OF THE U.S. BASES IN SPAIN. I ALSO MADE THE POINT, WITH WHICH SAUVAGNARGUES AGREED, THAT AN ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SPAIN AND NATO MIGHT HAVE A FAVORABLE IMPACT ON POST-FRANCO DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN SPAIN.

2. SAUVAGNARGUES STRESSED THAT HIS RESPONSE MUST BE CONSIDERED ENTIRELY PRELIMINARY AND SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING. HIS REACTION, WHICH WAS ENTIRELY PRAGMATIC AND NON-IDEOLOGICAL, CENTERED ON THE NEED TO SOLVE THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF RENEWING THE US-SPANISH BASE AGREEMENT. "TWO THINGS ARE CLEAR," SAUVAGNARGUES SAID, "U.S. BASES IN SPAIN ARE VITAL TO EUROPEAN DEFENSE," AND "SPAIN NEEDS A GESTURE TO JUSTIFY A RENEWAL OF THE AGREEMENT. THE QUESTION IS WHAT CAN WE DO TO FULFILL THIS REQUIREMENT." SAUVAGNARGUES THEN ACKNOWLEDGED THE PRESENCE OF MAJOR POLITICAL PROBLEMS WITHIN THE NATO ALLIANCE WITH RESPECT TO ANY TIES BETWEEN NATO AND SPAIN, BUT CONCLUDED THAT SUCH PROBLEMS ARE "MORE ACUTE AMONG THE SMALLER COUNTRIES OF NATO THAN IN FRANCE." IF A NAC DECLARATION RECOGNIZING SPAIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO NATO DEFENSE WERE PROPOSED, SAUVAGNARGUES SAID, THE SCANDINAVIANS, BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS WOULD PROBABLY INSIST ON A PARAGRAPH CALLING FOR DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN.

3. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION OF THE VARIOUS OPTIONS FOR BRINGING SPAIN INTO CLOSER LINKAGE WITH NATO, SAUVAGNARGUES SAID HE PERSONALLY LEANS TOWARD THE POSSIBILITY OF A FORMAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN SACEUR AND THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE SPANISH MILITARY. HE EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT COULD NOT ONLY HAVE A PRAGMATIC IMPACT, BUT A USEFUL POLITICAL IMPACT IF BLESSED BY A STATEMENT FROM THE NATO COUNCIL.

4. AGAIN, STRESSING THE PURELY EXPLORATORY AND PRELIMINARY NATURE OF HIS STATEMENTS, SAUVAGNARGUES PROMISED THAT OUR VIEWS ABOUT THIS PROBLEM WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL, AND HE WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH ME WITH A MORE DEFINITIVE RESPONSE VERY SOON.

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